

# **National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection**

## **Update on FSIS Training and Education**

### **Recommendations (2003) and Progress Made (2004)**

*What feedback do you have about these objectives for the delivery of training and education?*

Goal 1: Strengthen the public health, scientific, and technical skills of the workforce.

- Identify the training needs for new hires, continuing education needs of current employees.
- Two kinds of training are needed: theoretical and practical.
- Joint educational training as appropriate with FSIS, other federal agencies, states, consumers, and industry.

#### **FSIS Progress (2004)**

All major, mission critical occupational groups in the field have training needs identified and training programs established for new hires. The training combines theory and practical issues. Training on newly issued directives (10,240.2, 10,010.1, etc.) were provided to the field workforce and to industry through workshops as continuing education in FY 04. Additional work is underway to identify and address continuing training and education needs in FY 05. Training materials have been posted to the FSIS web site to make it accessible to states or other interested parties. States have been offered seats in FSIS training classes at no cost for the class. (States are responsible for travel to the training.) Several cooperative projects are underway with FDA (e.g., *Listeria monocytogenes*, food security). The International HACCP Alliance hosted one walk through of FSIS training for industry, and another is scheduled for November, 2004. Establishment personnel have been invited to participate at in plant food security training sessions. Work is underway to examine the possibility of joint training activities with industry.

*What feedback do you have about these objectives for the delivery of training and education?*

Goal 2: Enhance the ability of the workforce to protect meat, poultry and egg products from intentional harm.

- Add the known security and safety concepts regarding homeland security without diverting resources from traditional food safety mission.

#### **FSIS Progress (2004)**

FSIS has conducted the training for in plant personnel and establishment participants on “down” or “dark” days when the plant is not operation so as not diverted resources from its food safety mission.

*What feedback do you have about these objectives for the delivery of training and education?*

Goal 3: Make training and education accessible at the worksite.

- Centralized FSIS review of educational content so that the message is consistent from district to district and to all stakeholders.

#### **FSIS Progress (2004)**

The Center for Learning has taken the responsibility for reviewing training and education content and ensuring that a consistent message is delivered to all stakeholders. Instructor training and feedback sessions are scheduled on a quarterly basis. Regular contact is made to ensure that instructors have a clear understanding of emerging policies. The Technical Service Center has established a mechanism that allows for instructors to get rapid answers to any technical questions that arise as a result of class discussion. New instructors go through a rigorous mentoring and training process.

*What feedback do you have about these objectives for the delivery of training and education?*

Goal 4: Improve training for managers.

- Bring in more people with managerial and technical skills.
- Mentor, coach and train those within the Agency who are on the rise to develop managerial skills to replace those who retire.
- Build in training with career path/ladder associated with job description.
- Rotational assignments within the Agency.
- Use of multiple sources of education and training programs.

#### **FSIS Progress (2004)**

A pilot for FSIS succession planning, the District Manager assessment center, was conducted in FY 2004. This will help ensure that individuals selected as supervisors, managers, and leaders in field positions are trained to become effective.

FSIS has a new supervisor program, a Front Line Field Supervisor training program, and the Leadership Assessment and Development training program for more experienced managers, and FSIS participates in the Federal Executive Institute training and Senior Executive Forums, providing training and development at all managerial levels within FSIS.

FSIS has initiated work to assist employees in identifying career paths.

*What feedback do you have about these objectives for the delivery of training and education?*

Goal 5: Maintain and improve training and infrastructure.

- Establish incentives for continuing to learn, not just financial, such as CEU, college credits, reimbursements, administrative leave, and advanced degrees.
- Recognize and reward successful completion of educational training.
- Obtain external input for Agency training needs assessment from states and other stakeholders.

**FSIS Progress (2004)**

FSIS is authorized by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training as a certified provider of CEUs. These CEUs are accepted by some state boards for licensing purposes. Successful completion of FSIS training courses are linked with college credit when appropriate and possible (e.g., Enforcement Investigations and Analysis Officer training). Employees may list and receive credit for job and career-related training and education on applications for promotion. In FY 04 FSIS issued and implemented a directive making training a condition of employment, requiring employees entering an occupation to take and pass training within 90 days of entering on duty. An updated training directive currently in the clearance process will clarify policies on leave and reimbursement for education and other types of training. The FY04 budget was not adequate to support the centralized funding of college credits. Additional funds have been requested for FY05 that include covering the costs for such programs. FSIS Federal State Relations staff meets with states regularly to get input on training needs. FSIS has plans for FY 05 to gather input from other stakeholders regarding training needs.

*What feedback do you have about these objectives for the delivery of training and education?*

Goal 6: Respond to emerging and specialized needs.

- Specialized trainers are needed to address new policies, procedures and regulations.

**FSIS Progress (2004)**

Subject matter experts with specialized knowledge regularly contribute to the development of the content of FSIS training. In some cases, specialized trainers are obtained through contractual arrangement to provide training (e.g., auditing training, EIAO training, FLETC training).

*Will achieving them help FSIS become a public health agency that is a model for other public health institutions?*

Yes.

**FSIS Progress (2004)**

FSIS has vigorously pursued the accomplishment of the goals in the strategic plan in FY 04.

2. *What other suggestions do you have about delivering training and education?*

- Incorporate rigor into the education and training to ensure the goals of the Agency are met.
- Education provided by the Agency requires reciprocal commitment from employee with time in service.
- Assess employee's educational background to ensure that employee receives training at the appropriate level with an expectation of success.

- Provide opportunities for overview training for stakeholders especially on policy issues.

**FSIS Progress (2004)**

In FY 04, FSIS implemented training as a condition policies that require newly hired employees to take and pass training within 90 days after entering on duty. To pass, individuals must take a validated examination. In developing policies for reimbursing employees for the costs of job-related education, FSIS is planning to require a service agreement, as specified in the federal Training Act. Each FSIS training program is targeted to an occupational group (Food Inspector, Public Health Veterinarian, Consumer Safety Inspector, etc.) and the training needs associated with that occupational group. In FY 04, for the emerging policy issuances associated with BSE, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E. coli* O157:H7, and fecal contamination, FSIS conducted workshops through the U.S. for stakeholders to help them understand the policy issues.

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